

Film Monthly Review



THE
STORY OF
THE
WOMAN
BY
WALTER L. BROWN

THE ACADEMY CINEMA

Presents

IRIS

with

Mai Zetterling and

Alf Kjellin

and

I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING

with

Wendy Hiller and

Roger Livesey

Film Monthly Review

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EDITORIAL

THE big films made since the end of the war are the reflection of a tired world—their themes lacking courage, their technique lacking imagination, their treatment lacking poetry. Our films are made by contract. To make a film is no longer an artistic adventure. There is no longer any experiment, even in the documentaries. **There is no opportunity for youth.** And most of the small countries cannot enter into competition with the great

centres of production.

If the cinema were not in the hands of propagandists of a capitalistic world, whose greatest pre-occupation is that of pitying the "poor rich" and of showing how the poor of the world are really rich (and happy), it would then be able to contribute to the organisation of a better world.

We need far more films with the social significance of *The Grapes of Wrath*. — **CAVALCANTI**, "F.M.R." guest editorial writer.

Elsewhere Within

The Delegate from Utopia by <i>Walter Lassally</i>	—	—	4
Acting—Profession or Obsession? by <i>Andre Belhomme</i>	—	—	7
News from the Studios by <i>Brian Robins</i>	—	—	9
Art and Commerce by <i>Pat Roc</i>	—	—	14
Directors—Please Note! by <i>Jill Watt</i>	—	—	16
Why Not Civic Cinemas?	—	—	18
STRICTLY PICTORIAL	—	—	19
Candid Comments by <i>John W. Collier</i>	—	—	27
Harpo—The Mute One by <i>George Mason</i>	—	—	29
A Dictionary of Film Cliches by <i>Eric Goldschmidt</i>	—	—	31
Film Reviews	—	—	33
Cursory Rhymes by <i>Donald N. Cook</i>	—	—	34
The Movies Are on Trial by <i>Paul Nugat</i>	—	—	35
What of the Cartoon? by <i>R. E. Whitehall</i>	—	—	37
... And Whither Walt? by <i>Paul Nugat</i>	—	—	39
Silvana Mangano by <i>Cecelia Francis</i>	—	—	41

COVER STILL: Lola Albright, currently appearing in United Artists' *Champion*.

Edited by Robert Hirst

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THE DELEGATE FROM UTOPIA

by WALTER LASSALLY

At present, our film industry is hopelessly inefficient. But there is a remedy, says "the delegate from Utopia." The creative people must be given absolute control over the whole of the film business!

IT was during the latter half of the technicians' recent annual conference that the fraternal delegate from the Utopian film industry was asked to address the meeting. He looked quite an ordinary sort of a guy, youngish, perhaps, and, despite the fact that he had been listening for some hours to our technicians debating the crisis, he didn't wear the jaundiced look that they all seemed to have.

He began by saying that he would be as brief as possible, since in Utopia they believed in doing things rather than talking about them. "However, as the Utopian film industry was in much the same mess ten to fifteen years ago as you are now," he said, "a short historical survey would probably prove of value."

Creative People in Control

"First of all, since it became increasingly obvious that the film business was ridiculously inefficient as an industry and hopelessly shackled as an art, and that control of the industry by boorish financiers led to recurring slumps, while control by bureaucrats meant a steadily - maintained mediocrity the industry was finally placed in

the hands of the creative men and women who work in it.

"At first, finance was a difficult problem, but by pooling all their resources, forming co-operative units, starting on simple and inexpensive subjects, and going ahead regardless with an enthusiasm and drive born of their newly-won creative freedom, they had managed to gradually build up a considerable fund from which further productions were financed."

Academic Recognition

"Of course, costs had to be cut severely and even the technicians' wages work out to quite a bit less (cries of 'Shame!'), but this proved to be a blessing in disguise, for only those genuinely interested in the film medium remained, while the others migrated to the sausage industry, which at that time was highly remunerative. This meant room for some new talent, which came mainly from the Department of Cinematography of the University of Utopia (laughter), which had been wisely started some years back by a small group of men fighting a large amount of apathy. There was also quite a revival on the scripts side, with some up-and-



'...and distribution was regarded mainly as a transport agency.'

coming young novelists showing an interest in the regenerated film industry for the first time."

Malcontents — Bookmakers

"Naturally," the delegate continued, "a certain proportion of the industry was dead against its new form, and did its best to wreck the ambitious plans. But faced with a new spirit of enthusiasm on the part of the remainder, one by one these people found alternative fields of activity. Certain producers became impresarios, others joined the football-pool organisations, while yet others became successful bookmakers. The dissentient scriptwriters found profitable employment in pulp-fiction writing, while some other technicians started producing films for the 'What the butler saw' machines at the seaside."

Twilight of the Stars

"At the same time, the technical side of the industry was put on a more scientific basis. Television-film-recording methods are now in common use, although the original idea of the director 'mixing' and thus cutting the film largely on the set had to be abandoned, as it led to an inordinate outbreak of nervous breakdowns. The myth that films were best made (a) by not going **outside** the studio, and (b) by not going **inside** a studio, was soon exploded, and it can be fairly said that good use is now made of natural locations, both indoor and outdoor, as well as of all the technical tricks in the studio as and when demanded by the story being filmed.

"As the public's appreciation of the importance of the story increased, that of the stars diminished somewhat, and it became possible at last to cast the stars that were best suited to the story, instead of vice versa."

Facilities for Students

"Technical lecture courses and demonstrations for all technicians were arranged and well attended. Some years later the University opened its own experimental studio where students made short films under the guidance of experienced technicians. The Department of Cinematography was then under the leadership of one of our foremost directors of earlier days, who had retired and was devoting the rest of his life to passing on his knowledge and outlook. (Cries of 'Hear, hear!')

The Specialised Cinemas

"Later, this studio was also used by a film unit formed to make films designed for exhibition in the specialised cinemas. These cinemas, which grew out of the old 'Continental' cinemas of the bigger

towns, were now spread throughout the country, and played films of special interest from all over the world, including our own **avant garde** films produced at the University studio. Over a number of years these cinemas had built up a considerable audience of their own, consisting largely of people who had scorned the cinema in the past because of its low intelligence level. Many of the films shown here also enjoyed a special censor's certificate, which gave a much greater freedom than was possible hitherto." ("Hear, hear!")

Rise in Public Taste

"As you probably know," the delegate went on, "all our cinemas are completely divorced from production, as is also distribution. Thus a great deal of competition arises for the best films, and this acts as a guarantee of sustained high quality of production. As far as the audiences of the ordinary cinemas are concerned, public taste began to rise immediately the industry stopped assuming that it was very low and consequently stopped pandering to it. The rise in public taste over the last ten years was so remarkable, that the audience for films of a mental age of twelve now largely consists of youngsters who are twelve, and apart from these, it is no larger than your average audience for a Continental film."

Death of the News-reel

"When the double-feature programme was finally abolished about five years ago," the delegate continued, "it led to a great revival in the shorts field and the average programme to-day consists of a feature film, and however many shorts, of various lengths, the run-

ning time of the feature allows room for. News-reels, of course, died an inevitable death when television became as popular and nation-wide as your radio is now." (Gries of "Shame!")

Sole Criterion — Quality

"Since exhibitors now booked the best films from all countries, instead of the cheapest, the quota has become redundant. Thus the old state of affairs where a very bad 31-minute film received priority over a very good 29-minute film has been remedied, and films of any length can now get adequate exhibition and recoup their production costs. Full co-operation," the delegate concluded, "now exists between the Utopian film industry and all other film industries, ensuring a world-wide distribution of all products."

"It's up to Us"

In answer to a question, the delegate stated that distribution was considered so unimportant in Utopia that he had forgotten to mention it. With the production and finance of the industry in the hands of the creative artists within it, distributors had lost most of their power, while the divorcement from production and exhibition had robbed them of all control. Sumptuous dinners and cocktail parties had been the first victims, highly paid executives were next, and nowadays distribution was regarded mainly as a transport agency.

Another questioner suggested that while the developments outlined by the speaker were possible in Utopia, surely they were hardly applicable here. The delegate shrugged his shoulders. "I leave it to you," he said. **Copyright**

Acting— Profession or Obsession?

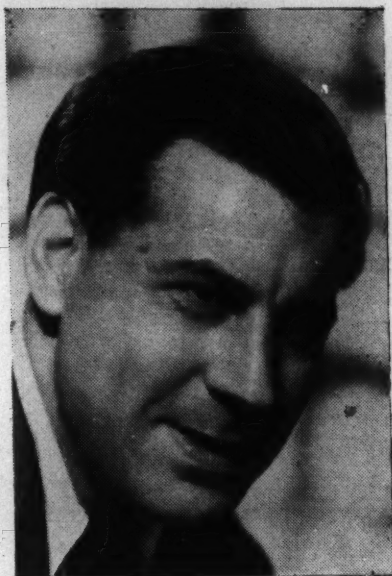
by *ANDRE BELHOMME*

**"But they never stop acting!"
is the censure levelled at far too
many actors.**

**A repertory actor of long
experience answers this charge**

MANY a parson, they say, would have made a good actor. The inverse may be true, except that the sermons might contain too many references to "tearing them up" in neighbouring parishes!

Yet, the two professions have much in common; each demands a dynamic sense of vocation if there is to be success. By nature, each requires patience, zeal and sincerity. The pursuit of either means an evolving from profession to obsession—not of a morbid nature, but rather of a kind that never permits the work to be set aside entirely. Once the pebble has splashed into the vocational pool, there is a constant effort to dis-



(Portrait by Russell Sedgwick.)

cern the direction of the widening waves of comprehension and effectiveness.

As a consequence, those who associate with artistes often hear the gibe: "But they never **stop acting!**"

The taunt is partially true, but it would not be made seriously if people fully understood the vocation of the actor (and actress of course).

Consider the painter with his canvas, brush and colour; the musician who patiently tinkles out his composition; the author who writes, amends and sculptures meaning out of words. All, in contrast to the artiste, most fortunate people; their materials are so much more tangible.

To a degree, the actor **cannot help** acting when he is off the

stage or film sets; he must always experiment with himself. Whatever his mood, wherever he is, there is always a sub-conscious personal evaluation of his reaction on people.

Aids to Authenticity

And, anyway, his assets are very complex. Always he must acutely analyse life itself. He must possess the ability to enter into the "psyche" of a part. His voice, deportment and expression must be shaded with all the finer subtleties of intonation, gesture and all-embracing meaning and feeling. Otherwise, there can be no authentic portrayal of a given character in a determined situation. These attributes are exercised to a sustained degree in the theatre, where, except for the minutest role, no artiste can get away with a thirty-second "take"!

Stage acting naturally gives a great deal of satisfaction to an artiste; he benefits from the live contact across the footlights. Indeed, it has been argued that no actor is a complete entity unless he has an audience.

Sincerity Essential

And this brings us to the problem of the actor before the camera. Many an artiste maintains that the arduous business of film making is stultifying. But much depends on his outlook; if he regards filming as a necessary evil, in order that he may receive lavish payment, then, whatever his ability, he cannot disguise a certain mechanical quality in his work.

However, the artiste who thinks beyond the financial aspect dis-

covers and enjoys some quite amazing things. He finds that the studio technicians and general personnel on the set make a most enthusiastic audience indeed. The atmosphere during that tense, nervous lull, before the "take," is very highly charged . . . a sharp, exquisite sensation, as if an exacting patron of the arts held his Damocles sword suspended over the set—ready to plunge down in criticism, or to rise in gentle, grateful knighthood of the actor.

No, filming is certainly not a deadening experience; it is nerve-racking, with an infinitesimal margin for error. In correct perspective, however, with that tiny mental image of the potential cinema audience in his mind, the actor finds these moments exhausting but also exhilarating.

Director and the Actor

As to the question of the extent to which a director should use the artiste as a rigidly-controlled piece of acting putty—the answer rarely depends upon the capacity of the player. In ratio to his ability, he is that much more or less a parrot; obviously, the actor cannot be given unlimited licence. The director on the set is the top co-ordinator—it is his decision that should be final.

Directors usually prefer to balance their conception of how a scene should be played with how the players "feel" the situations and dialogue. Accomplished, responsive acting and sensitive direction touch the screen with reality; directorial style should not mean dictatorship.



by BRIAN ROBINS

"Film Monthly Review" Studio Reporter.

PRODUCTION in British studios this month has a strongly international flavour. More films are being shot now than at any time so far this year; there are twenty pictures on the floor at eleven studios, and five British units are on location in Europe, Africa and in this country. At least 50 per cent. of these films are cosmopolitan ventures with British, American, French or Italian technicians and artistes.

WORK FOR "REDUNDANTS"

The ever-increasing number of foreign film makers to be seen in the offices, stages and corridors of British studios has certainly had no ill effect on the industry's unemployment situation; 500 more film technicians have come off the inactive list during the past seven weeks, and there is every indication that, after the customary two-week August holiday break in production, more major features will set the twelve stages of Denham and Pinewood working to full capacity.

By far the greatest foreign influence in our studio to-day is the

American film maker. Since the first month of the year, technicians from the United States have had a hand in the shooting of twelve first-feature pictures here, and this international co-operation is responsible for the first-class technical results.

DISNEY

Shooting began at Denham last month on the Robert Louis Stevenson story, **Treasure Island**—Walt Disney's first all-"live" film enterprise. Bobby Driscoll, who won the lead in the brilliantly directed and photographed second feature, **The Window**, plays Jim Hawkins, and British actor Robert Newton has been signed up now for the character of Long John Silver. Set building of a nautical nature has been in progress on the studio lot for several weeks. Under R.K.O.-Radio patronage, Walt Disney British Productions was formed recently to make this picture.

Another development in this field is clear in the recent announcement by Jos Friedman, vice-president of Columbia Pictures International Corporation, that

his company will make four films in Britain soon, chiefly for British audiences.

HITCHCOCK

For the first time in ten years, veteran director Alfred Hitchcock returned to the Associated British £1,000,000 studio plant at Boreham Wood, in order to begin **Stage Fright**. It was on this site, in the old British International Pictures studio, that Hitchcock shot **Blackmail** in 1929. It was the first British talkie.

Stage Fright occupies two completely new stages opened for production a month ago. Extensive location work has been done in both Mayfair and East Anglia. Cast includes Jane Wyman, Michael Wilding, and Marlene Dietrich, but Hitchcock is enthusiastic about the ability of young Richard Todd, a comparative newcomer.

DIETRICH

Dietrich may head the cast list in producer Anatole de Grunwald's long-awaited **World Premiere**, which may be made at Elstree instead of Teddington, which is de Grunwald's regular studio. His current production is **Three Men and a Girl**, directed by Gordon Parry, with Czech actress Paula Valenska, Burgess Meredith, Richard Murdoch and Jean-Pierre Aumont. Dietrich will probably begin work on **World Premiere** as soon as Hitchcock's picture comes off the floor on August 15th. **Stage Fright** is part of a two-year programme of film production—costing two millions—which is the result of a recent financial arrangement between Associated British and Warner Bros. This deal means a guaranteed distribution in the United States of the films made by A.B.P.C. at Elstree, (Boreham Wood).

WELLES

The 100-strong technical unit making **The Black Rose** (Tyrone Power, Orson Welles) for 20th Century-Fox, returned from North Africa to Shepperton, and is shooting English exteriors now.



ORSON WELLES

Also back from the African-desert territory is Ronald Neame and his **Golden Salamander** unit, which began work at Pinewood. Both African locations lasted about two months.

M.G.M. recently discharged 60 technicians from their Elstree studio, on the grounds there was no work for them, but latest report is that a sequel to the successful **Mrs. Miniver** will be shot there in the autumn with Greer Garson again in the lead.

FAIRBANKS

Big star names from the other side of the Atlantic to work in studios here soon include Douglas



*Vivacious Czech Star Paula Valenska beguiles Richard Murdoch with a gay melody in Anatole de Grunwald's **THREE MEN AND A GIRL.***

Fairbanks, signed for an Alexander Korda subject; Jennifer Jones, who was announced as making a film with producer David O. Selznick following her marriage to him; and Richard Widmark who went in front of the cameras at Shepperton to make **Night and the City** this month. Its story is about Scotland Yard's fight against crime.

The Selznick film is tentatively entitled **Gone to Earth**. Robert Montgomery is directing and starring in a David Rose production, **Your Witness**, at Teddington. And Gene Tierney is working with Widmark at Shepperton.

POPULAR ITALY

British producers are now keener to take advantage of the vast overseas market for both production and distribution. A new company, Orlux Films, are making their first picture, **Her Favourite Husband**, in Rome and Naples (Jean Kent, Rona Anderson);



RONA ANDERSON

Joseph Janni, producer for Victoria Films, has completed **Honeymoon Deferred** in Italy; and Two Cities—now renamed J. Arthur Rank

Productions, Ltd.—are in Florence shooting the screen version of Aldous Huxley's short story, **The Prodigy**.



KIERON MOORE

... AND GERMANY

Two Cities also have a unit in Hamburg making a film tribute to the war-time efforts of the Guards Armoured Division, entitled **They Were Not Divided**. Producer Rod Geiger, who is making **Give Us This Day** for Plantaganet Films, went to Germany recently in order to arrange for the production there of **The Devil's General**. Story deals with the life and struggles of "ace" aviator Ernest Udet against the Nazi Party regime

"DANCING YEARS"

There is a joint French and British camera crew at Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, shooting a bilingual version of the Canadian novel, **Maria Chapdelaine** (Michele Morgan, Françoise Rosay, Kieron Moore). Rumanian and French influence is obvious in **The Spider and the Fly** (Eric Portman, Guy Rolfe), directed by Robert Hamer at Pinewood. Leading woman star is Bucharest-born Nadia Gray. All the film's exterior scenes were shot in Paris.

Producer Warwick Ward is back at Elstree with **The Dancing Years**

unit, until recently on location in Austria making a Technicolor version of the Ivor Novello play.

SECOND FEATURES

Producer Harry Reynolds courageously intends to break into the major first-feature market in September. After only three years as producer—during this period he made a second-feature series of the popular Old Mother Riley slapstick films—Reynolds is putting Hugh Griffiths and Mai Zetterling into an important subject, **All on a Summer's Day**. His studio will be Pinewood, and locations are now being shot at Margate.



MAI ZETTERLING

FILMS FOR £15,000

Exclusive Films, the most successful competitor in the difficult British second-feature market, have made four screen versions of popular radio serials during the last six months at a country house near Maidenhead. This experiment in film making without a studio has led to great economy in time and money—each picture was completed for less than £15,000—and the unit are this month moving to new and larger mansion premises near Windsor. They have tackled **Dick Barton, Dr. Morelle** and **Meet the Rev** already, and now the **Man in Black** will go in

front of the cameras. Because of their exceptional technical quality, these films are the only second features made in Britain to-day which earn a showing on the large circuits.

USTINOV

Set for production during the autumn is another Boulting Brothers' film, not yet titled, the life story of Galileo, the eminent astrologer—the film is to be made in Italy by the recently formed Elizabethan Films and a new Rod Geiger production, "Steeper Cliff." This is a story about the Allied military administration in Germany.

At the end of this month a Pilgrim Pictures' unit led by producer Peter Ustinov and director Fergus McDonnell, will go to Italy to begin location work there on the film version of a play by Peter Blackmore, "A Pinch of Salt."

It is encouraging to see that the oldest studios in this country—Nettlefold, at Walton-on-Thames—has seen the completion of six features from January to July, 1949.



Toni Morrelli crouches perilously on top of Blackpool Tower in
DICK BARTON STRIKES BACK

Let's Have A Combination Of Art And Commerce

BY PAT ROC

With her wide experience of film making in Britain, America and France, Pat Roc firmly believes that British films can be successful, both artistically and financially.

WHEN asked by "Film Monthly Review" to write an article about my views on the British film industry I hesitated a little. Then I remembered that one of the most useful and distinctive aspects of my career is that I have been privileged to make films in Britain, America and France, so my thoughts might, after all, be worth putting down.

France—Art, plus Dividends

The idea of cutting stars' salaries and paying them, like authors and playwrights, according to receipts, is not entirely new. In certain French film companies this method of sharing the dividends has been in force for some time, with the best of results—one of the most important factors being that the production then becomes "our" film.

I received bonuses from my two French films, *Retour a la Vie* and *Le Tour Eiffel*, with which I was able to buy some lovely frocks from a leading Parisian designer.

The hours of work in French studios are completely different from ours. They begin at midday and everyone gets together over a good meal. Then they shoot right through the afternoon and evening without a break. At 7.30 p.m. aperitifs are served on the set.

Hollywood—Business Only

In the U.S.A., the policy is for 100 per cent. business, with art nudging for elbow room. In France, on the other hand, they vote for 100 per cent. art, and let the business take place in the wings. In this country, we should be able to relate the hand of one to the heart of the other in one sound body.

Yesterday, we, like the French, were working under immense difficulties. To-day, we have the best equipment and talent; and we have learnt our lessons. Now, the time has come to cultivate our own approach.

We must forge a successful highway between art and commerce.

Pat Roc as she
appears in *Two Cities*
**THE PERFECT
WOMAN**



DIRECTORS-PLEASE NOTE!

by JILL WATT

"Too many of our younger film directors are being led astray by artistic ballyhoo," says 16-year-old Jill Watt, who writes on behalf of those of the younger generation who are not afraid to shoulder their responsibilities. "It is the theme, the worth - while theme, that is of paramount importance."

IT seems time that a younger member of the film public tackled this question of film art; it is undoubtedly a most important one, particularly for British films, which have shown of late a disquieting tendency to disregard art in favour of a cheap commercial policy.

Film—a Social Force

Is art important? Yes. Definitely. It is important because the medium of film is an artistic medium. But it is not only that. Film, whether it likes it or not, is a social force, and has an incredibly wide influence on the world's people. As such, it has great responsibilities, and these have to be considered, along with all the other things that so beset a film maker. His foundation work, his fundamental story, must first be correct in that respect. Art does come into the interpretation of the thing. "Art for art's sake" is merely ridiculous. It is like the type of poetry turned out by "long-haired" students.

Worth - While Themes

It is useless to make something of "sound and fury," signifying nothing. A film has got to

signify something — something definite and worth while. Once you have that, you can throw in all the sound and fury you like (up to a point!) and you will then have a good film. All the true artistic classics of literature had strong stuff to work on; the best of them had themes that meant something of value to every man—a moral, if you like. "Hamlet" is a classic worked on those lines, and it is a play that matters, and that will matter through the ages.

Laying the Foundations

The first thing, then, is to find a theme—a story which matters in human experience and can be of significance to the people of our time. It is then that art comes in. Once you have the foundations, you can build your house; but you must have for it rock, not sand.

The artist's interpretation is the other half of the picture. He can take the material given to him, and he can interpret it in terms of filmic art, in the methods so laboriously expounded by film devotees. If he is good, he can turn his film into a sheer lyric. That is the other half, and any-



(Portrait by C. E. Sweetland, A.R.P.S.)

one who has read a number of film text-books will know it, at least in theory, inside out; but it is only a half, and the other part has to come first. The **Potemkin** massacre sequence is always cited as one of the supreme examples of film art. So it is. But it is supreme because it interprets the feelings of the people under those awful circumstances, because it terrifyingly drives home the horror of the suffering of those innocent people, not simply because it is a set of fine pictures, beautifully timed and set together.

For "Arty Types."

I think that this is something which badly needs to be brought home to our younger directors of

the "artistic" type, and even more so to those who will follow them—the young people who, because of the present crisis, cannot find either employment or training. For, at present; they are, of necessity, learning their art from books; and they are apt to be led astray by what is often largely artistic ballyhoo. If only our present and future directors will learn that they must use art only in conjunction with themes that are of significance to the public, who are so much influenced by them, then we shall have no need to worry about the future of the British film industry. (And if you consider that a pious and impracticable statement, reflect on the

themes of the world's best films, and hold them up against it.)

Time for Responsibility.

So, will the directors of Britain's films please realise that, although we are already proud of their increasing artistic ability, and want them to become in time the

best film artists in the world, yet, if they ignore their social responsibility and waste their art on themes that matter no more than a snap of the fingers, then we shall feel them to be worth no more than that themselves, for all their skill.

WHY NOT CIVIC CINEMAS?

WILL it ever be possible to break the stranglehold that the existing cinema circuits have over the small, independent film producers?

That possibility has been opened up by the 1948 Local Government Act (Clause 132) which permits civic authorities to do most things in the sphere of public entertainment. At the moment, the demands for economy in capital expenditure, plus the difficulties of supply for the building industry, prevent much being done; but a start may very well be made when the new towns, now being planned, eventually take shape.

Lesson from Norway

What would be the result? Censorship? Inefficiently — run cinemas and a new drain on the rates? Fortunately, the field is not entirely unexplored. Since 1915 there have been municipal cinemas in Norway, and the experience of Oslo, a town of only 300,000 people, is significant.

The cinemas that this city took over were out of date; consequently, for twenty-six years, ten million kroner from profits went to an erection fund, and a larger part of the profits was ploughed back in order to recondition exist-

ing cinemas. In spite of these large development charges, another ten million kroner was devoted to cultural and social products. Subsidies were paid to a museum and sculptural park, a theatre in Oslo's East End, sports fields and schools' cinematograph equipment. Pensions were provided for actors, the Philharmonic Association was aided, an old people's home was erected and a concert hall was built. In addition, fifteen thousand kroner was contributed towards the cost of redecorating the Town Hall, and seven million kroner was paid into the City Treasury to relieve local rates.

Raising Standards

These figures are particularly interesting because the cinema, in Norway, on account of the dearth of films in the native tongue, is not so popular as it is over here.

Civic cinemas in the new towns of Britain in the future, with their film-trained, film-hungry populations, might very well be able to provide a well-endowed, broad cultural life for their patrons and citizens. And in other areas local authorities might very well be on the alert when there are cinemas for sale.

J.W.C

Private Angelo

Associated
British/Pilgrim
Production.
Directed by
Peter Ustinov



STRICTLY PICTORIAL

Angelo and His Sweetheart



Peter Ustinov and Maria Denis

Mystery Man



James Robertson Justice.



Robin Bailey.

'What would your mother say!'

Count Piccolograno
(Godfrey Tearle)
lectures his son on
his lack of courage.
Mention of Angelo's
mother reduces both
of them to tears.



'THE COUNT IS IN ROME!'



*Angelo unheroically
reveals where his
father is hiding,
after slight physical
pressure has been
applied by Germans.*

The Roman scene. Two G.I.s apply American methods of introduction, much to the amazement of both the Count and Angelo.

**'Hi ya,
Toots!'**



Embarrassing for Angelo!



On their wedding day, Angelo and Lucrezia are somewhat perturbed at the inopportune appearance of Lucrezia's little son.



The Countess (Marjorie Rhodes) is quite definitely not on speaking terms with Count Piccologrando.



Trouble at the Customs. But the two ex-Commando officers (Robin Bailey and Bill Shinn) meet the Chief, their friend



Margaret Lockwood as Lydia Garth, the girl who loses her sight.

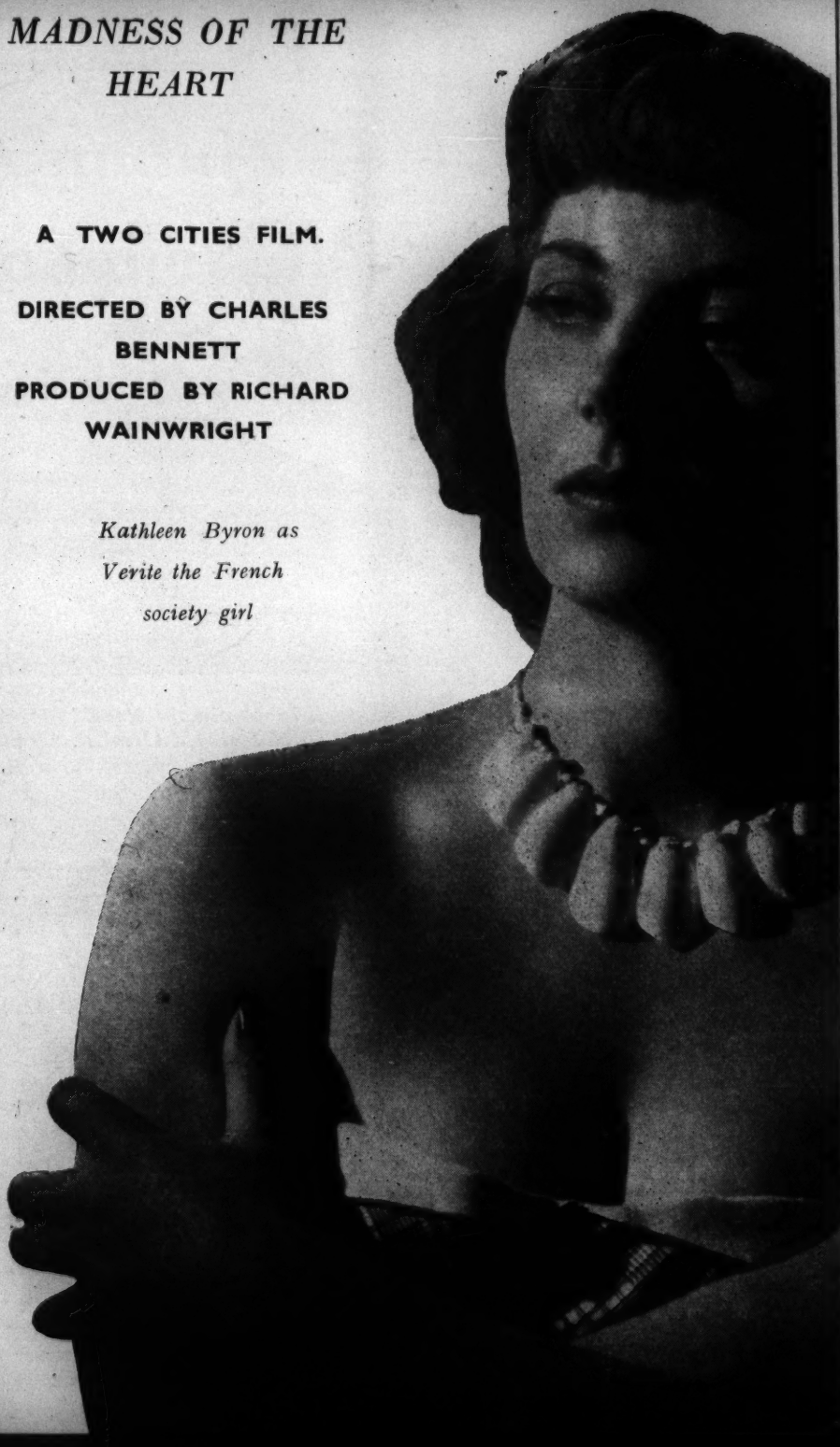
**MADNESS OF THE
HEART**

A TWO CITIES FILM.

**DIRECTED BY CHARLES
BENNETT**

**PRODUCED BY RICHARD
WAINWRIGHT**

*Kathleen Byron as
Verite the French
society girl*





French star Jacques Sernas will be seen in the Ronald Neame production, THE GOLDEN SALAMANDER.



Ingrid Bergman and Mario Vitale watch Gian Paolo Callegari as he works on the script for Roberto Rossellini's R.K.O. picture, STROMBOLI.

Candid Comments

by

JOHN W. COLLIER

More Action Wanted

MORE films in fewer hours for less pounds seems to be one way of expressing the future solution of the film crisis in Britain—if we leave out of account the queer things that may happen as the result of American hard bargaining.

Things were simpler in the past. A cursory dip into history discloses the early record, for instance, of John Ford. In 1917 he directed no fewer than twelve films. They were only two-reelers and all cut to the Wild West pattern; nowadays the documentary boys often take five or six times that period. And their films, too, are often of a pattern.

Nor was Ford's 1917 record a fluke, for in the following years his output was as great, though with fewer and longer films. In 1939, the year of *Stagecoach*, he also released *Young Mr. Lincoln* and *Drums Along the Mohawk*. And then *The Grapes of Wrath* was ready for release in January, 1940.

Nowadays some of our films seem to take so long in the making that they get lost en route!

Ealing Studios' Policy

Three comedies in a row from Ealing Studios indicates a policy. It was nearly three years ago, when they themselves were heavily committed to a programme of dramas, adventure stories, costume pieces and epics, that they began thinking of British comedies. It was their view that British films had gone far enough in the exploitation of spivs and sordid surroundings. Not that Ealing had previously neglected the comic. Many years ago they were responsible for the George Formby pictures, and three years ago the delightful *Hue and Cry* was in the offing. Not long back, in a local cinema, when a re-issue of this film was announced, there was a noticeable murmur of pleasurable anticipation from the audience. One wished that the makers of the film could have been present in order to enjoy such appreciation, the sort of reward that is surely better than all the plaudits of the critics.

Carry on, Sir Michael!

Ealing is not now tied to comedy, of course. Australian epics and location films are two of their other shots, and some of their directors are looking for good stories in quite other fields. The irony of the present position is that the recent policy situation at Ealing, because of the film crisis and in spite of what we have said in an earlier paragraph about "more films" to meet it, was that they were forced to the decision to make only four films a year! These were to be on a documentary basis, taking an aspect of British life for treatment. This policy is being pursued at the moment by way of two stories based on Fleet Street and the

Police Force.

Actually Ealing's record is a surprisingly varied one; and what a record for quality—in spite of some relative failures! But a policy is still evident in this variety, for the two complimentary strains of documentary and fantasy are time after time apparent.

It would certainly be a national loss if the programme of such a team of artists and technicians were for any reason curtailed.

Stars Learn to Act!

It is amusing to hear film stars of long standing publicly admitting that they would like to take a turn in stage plays in order to get "some basic training." It is not really so much a sign of artistic humility as a form of re-insurance in case the film crisis goes bad on them and contracts are not renewed. In most cases they bring only a synthetic fame to the theatre, and they are already finding out that even the box office of the legitimate theatre is more choosey than the casting office of the film world. This phenomenon may have a salutary effect in drawing renewed attention to the sterling qualities of many stage actors in repertory companies and elsewhere, who play for years without recognition, while elegant young ladies and gentlemen are expensively groomed for meretricious fame.

Few Real Artistes

And it is refreshing to be reminded occasionally of the few real actors on the screen—mostly graduated from the stage. Such an experience, for instance, as the recent revival of **The Lady Vanishes** which displayed Michael Redgrave's unique talents. It is

good for the theatre, but bad for the cinema that he is able to withstand the golden blandishments of the silver screen.

Justice might reasonably demand that the cinema, as well as the State, should subsidise theatres. So much of the best raw material for films, in the form of plays and players, is drawn from the theatre.

The Last Word

One would not normally look in the "Nursing Mirror and Midwives' Journal" for film criticism, but on **The Snake Pit** it achieved the sanest comment so far. The rest of the Press seemed to compete to make confusion grow where none grew before. Even where critics expressed a reasonable point of view their sub-editors seemed to believe that as hysteria was some part of the film's subject matter it should be apparent in their headlines.

Perceptive Producer

The sharp division of opinion is on whether the film will have a good or bad social effect, and on this point the "Nursing Mirror" is authoritatively for showing the film in the belief that it will do good. One point it makes is that the film does not sentimentalise the nurses and does not, indeed, present the nurses' point of view. Perhaps here is the subject for an entirely different film?

The strange thing is that the film is much more vivid than the book, yet the distinguishing feature of the book, its cunning and gradual disclosure, is quite outside the range of film to convey. Whoever decided that **The Snake Pit** could be filmed certainly had a penetrating eye.

HARPO—

THE MUTE ONE

by GEORGE MASON

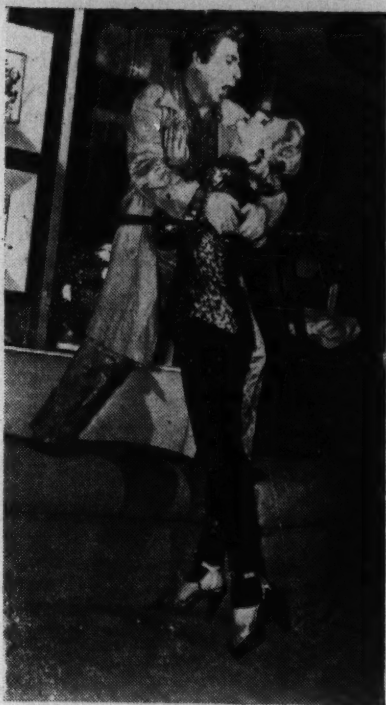
Is Harpo Marx really dumb? Is it actually he himself who plays the harp? George Mason, who worked with Harpo, tells us the real facts about this crazy comic

REMEMBER the films, *The Coconut*, *Duck Soup*, *A Night at the Opera* and *A Day at the Races*? Then you remember the Marx Brothers.

The middle-aged will recall them with delight and, though probably confusing one with the other (despite the fact that they are in no way alike on the screen), will remember the maddest of the three brothers—the one with the tousled mop of curly hair, and impish sparkle in his eyes, the one who chases the girls and, in every picture, plays the harp. This is Harpo Marx, the brother who has never spoken on the screen.

Is He Really Dumb?

It is unbelievable how many people still think Harpo is really dumb. This question arose innumerable times during his recent appearance in London. It was even the first question a famous English star asked when hearing Harpo was over here. London audiences discussed it and wondered among themselves—one patron even doubted that Harp played the harp, suggesting that some off-stage device was used instead!



Cave-man Harpo with Ilna Massy in the new Marx Brothers film LOVE HAPPY.

Chaplinesque Technique.

Harpo's technique is Chaplinesque—he never appears in films or allows a Press picture to be taken, unless it is in perfect character with the famous blond wig, the battered hat (still the original) and gown. But, unlike Chaplin, Harpo has yet to speak in films, though he is seriously considering breaking this cult for a story he strongly favours for his next picture. But present plans are very undecided.

Very Co-operative Star.

Harpo, incognito, is quiet and serious, yet always ready to laugh—and talk—and most willing to co-operate. In fact, Harpo Marx is the publicity man's dream. It requires the unusual diplomacy of

preventing him from doing things that are not permissible over here in Britain; he himself constantly suggests ideas. For instance, he visualised himself, in character, of course, sitting dejectedly on the doorstep of No. 10, Downing Street, waiting for the Premier! He wanted, also, to climb the Eros statue in Piccadilly Circus! Good pictures for the Press; but the publicity man would land in gaol long before the objective was completed!

Stunts in the Strand.

However, there was a certain day in the Strand that will not be forgotten in a hurry. We had a publicity stunt, and it only partly came off; but it is an occasion that will be remembered. The roadway was under repair and the idea was to get Harpo digging madly in the middle of the road looking, as he put it, for the shilling Jack Benny dropped on his last visit here! The crowds soon spotted the famous hat and wig and gathered round, holding up the traffic and clamouring for autographs. A taxi parked down a side street was used as a dressing-room and, making his way down to it, Harpo grabbed the door handle only to have it come away in his hand. This incident was genuine but it was as Marxian as if it had been planned.

Yet another day, Harpo walked down the Strand and was not recognised by a soul; he was wearing a dark-blue suit and snap-brim trilby.

Harpo — The Composer

Harpo, the man, is a most unassuming person; but Harpo, the musician, is truly amazing. He can't read a note of music, and yet he has composed several pieces for the harp! In his dressing-room at the London Palladium he admitted all callers.

During interviews he usually strums his harp. This achieves three things. Firstly, it is Harpo tuning up and practising, which he does for half an hour before his stage appearance; secondly, it charms and fascinates the visitor; thirdly, it's very obvious he can't keep away from the harp—he loves it. You don't have to ask for a demonstration, call in any time and it's ten to one he will be playing; and willingly he explains the most intricate part of harp-playing—the operation of the seven foot-pedals.

Ten to one also, he will play, sooner or later, one of a series of three of his own compositions—all with the same name, "Elma," the first, second and third, dedicated to a friend of Harpo simply because he thought it was a queer name for a man. And then there is "Aphrodisiac," another of Harpo's compositions. Amazing when you realise these are not on paper but all in Harpo's memory. But he prefers Debussy and Ravel for the harp, though he likes Gershwin tunes, too.

Curbstone Interview!

His voice is deep and true American, as is his natural, unassuming manner and, without make-up, there is a strong resemblance between him and his piano-playing brother, Chico, though Chico is dark and Harpo is fair.

Perhaps in the near future, like Chaplin, his voice will be heard on the screen. Personally, I hope not, for those expressions of his tell much more than any voice could. But, this remains to be seen.

Incidentally, how many great artistes would give an interview sitting on a curbstone of the Victoria Embankment Gardens? This is symbolic of Harpo Marx's unaffected personality.

A Dictionary of Film Cliches (F-I)

by ERIC GOLDSCHMIDT

F for Flower Language.

WHEN botany runs out, the dialogue relies on flowery music. Take Lucy who meets her French teacher ten years after leaving school. Lucy's coiffure dangles no more; it's gathered into a sophisticated chignon now and Lucy's specs are removed. They must celebrate all this. There's a leetle restaurant yoost round the corner, and oo iss waiting to greet them? It is Giulio, their old pal. He shows them to the same old table and presents the same old bouquet. When the sniffing is over what does the band do? "Why, darling, they're playing our song. Remember?"

Sure we remember. We remember that, and Mamma, and the tax collector . . . As if we had any choice!

G for Gee.

- (1) "Gee baby."
- (2) "Gee baby, I could."
- (3) "Gee baby, I could go for you."
- (4) "Gee baby, I could go for you in a big way."
- (5) "Gee baby, I could go for you in a big way, you gorgeous blonde—what-chasay?"

It's harder, as you know, for gir.s. The male of the species can stride across the screen in a sweat-shirt. Every time that damsel pops up, all the accessories have to be refitted and the entire wardrobe department is in a panic. The male has a comeback, though. To show that his elemental virility doesn't stale a bit, to limber some novelty into his routine, an ever-increasing number of words are added to the basic proposition "Gee." (See illustration above.)

Suppose the heroine is a poor little rich girl. Her boy friend must, of necessity, be a hick of a lower order; and to indicate the

drug-store setting from which he springs he uses the first of the above phrases. Then, as her influence leaves its mark on his education, phrase two comes up. Girl goggles with glee at the improvements in phrase four. In the ninth reel she looks into his eyes. She repeats it verbatim and then they swing into a duet. On a G-string. **H for "Heavy."**

Top marks go to Francis L. Sullivan when he bestrides the screen with his corrugated belly well to the fore. When that happens the other "heavies" blanch with envy and call up the union. There has never been a "heavy" like Francis L. Bob Newton, he of the hissing "S," can score in the welter-weight class. Attenborough, Farr, Hartnell and Lom are superb fly-weights. For the British top "heavy" title, however, there is and remains only one contestant.

Hollywood, in a similar predicament, imports them, of course. At great cost a band of cabaleros has been recruited and groomed for the job. Many coconuts were expended on giving these gents elocution lessons. And even so, it's not foolproof. Having hissed: "Hedy! Let me ron through your 'air," the foreign "heavy" is apt to add: "barfoot," which ruins the scene completely. To guard against such lapses Hollywood now adopts the ruse of letting Boris Karloff play American doctors, while Dana Andrews is a Russian spy. That foils the sticklers for accuracy and lightens the strain on the over-worked "heavies."

I for Indians, Irishmen, etc.

And seeing the multitudes he went up on to the rostrum; and when he was on the set, his stooges came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit.

for theirs is the crowd scene. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be analysed. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the sub-plot. They are the salt

of the earth; but if the salt hath lost its savour wherewith shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing but to be typecast and to be trodden underfoot of he-men".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WHAT EFFECT IN BRITAIN ?

On a station bookstall I picked up a copy of the June issue of "Film Monthly Review," and I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed its contents, particularly the illuminating article by R. E. Whitehall entitled "Have We No Time for Humanity," which I found very interesting.

There is, however, one point I would like to make. Mr. Whitehall dealt mainly with the effect of films like "Crossfire" on the American public; could he possibly follow up with another article—this time on audiences in this country. — **RAYMOND DEL CASTILLO**, "Kingstone," nr. Uttoxeter, Staffs.

ENTERTAINMENT ?

Would you please forward me a copy of the May issue of "Film Monthly Review," which I unfortunately missed.

I am pleased with the high standard of the articles in your magazine; many of them give a great deal of food for thought. Please keep it up.

In reply to the article by R. E. Whitehall, I agree that "Gentleman's Agreement" was rather slow and wordy. But, that slowness did help to stress that the film had something to say.

"Crossfire," on the other hand, was a fast-moving film which, even without its social issue, would have been a good picture. But only a few times in this film were you told that its real purpose was

to expose anti-Semitism. And how many people realised that purpose? In my opinion, many simply thought it to be good, swift entertainment.

With "Gentleman's Agreement," however, you could not help but think of the problems and facts that it brought to light. — **J. E. ATKIN**, 23, Grantham Road, Sleaford, Lincs.

OUR JUNE COVER GIRL . .

Please send me a copy of "European Film Review," as advertised in the June issue of "Film Monthly Review," which I find a very attractive publication.

I would also be very grateful if you could let me have the name and details regarding the young actress featured on your cover. Although an ardent film-goer for a number of years, I do not recall having seen her on this side of the Channel.

If her acting ability is equal to her looks, she should not be long in reaching stardom. — **F. W. GUMLEY**, 59, Glasnevin, Dublin.

..... URGENT!

Would it be possible for you to send us the address of the Cover Girl on "Film Monthly Review," Vol. 7, No. 6? We would like to obtain an autographed photograph of her.

Would you please treat this as urgent, as we are shortly to be posted. — **SIX REDCAPS**, R.M. Police Detachment, Budbrooke Barracks, Warwick.

FILM REVIEWS

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS.

This comedy of manners is the third of a trilogy from Ealing Studios. An essay in the art of murder, it deals with the young aspirant to a dukedom. In order to attain this rank he finds it necessary to eliminate a mere eight people who stand in the way of his inheritance. He gets away with each liquidation and finally is convicted of a murder which he did not commit.

Dennis Price sails through his career of homicide with a suave equanimity which always puts right on his side. His methods of dispensing with his victims vary from bow and arrows to high explosives all executed with an impeccable politeness which defies accusation.

The last murder, unfortunately, seemed to stand outside this general tendency, in that it contained a touch of malice which seemed entirely out of keeping. Murder ceased to be a vocation, on which basis we were hitherto prepared to accept it with sympathy.

Yet even this major lapse from the comic vein does not debar the film from being a witty and intelligent piece of cinema.

Alex Guinness plays all eight victims and displays such versatility that we are conscious only of his separate roles—never, except on reflection, of the single artist.

Valerie Hobson gives a beautiful performance; and there is good acting from Miles Malleon and John Penrose.

PRIVATE ANGELO

Private Angelo, an adaptation of a Linklater novel, has suffered much ungenerous criticism on the grounds that the attempt and not the deed has confounded its producer. But credit should surely be given for an attempt to present that omnipresent yet often neglected individual, the baffled, cowardly and peace-loving conscript.

It is true that there are some gaping examples of miscasting. Godfrey Tearle, as the Count, plays Othello who has wandered on to the wrong set. Marjorie Rhodes, as the Countess, is equally unhappy, and transfers the discomfort of her rank to the utter incongruousness of her acting.

Peter Ustinov himself, who is responsible for the production and title role, has carried out his tremendous task in a successful, although erratic, fashion. When he does convince as the simple, almost childlike, soldier, he invites a sympathy that results in self-identification.

Too often, however, he is soliloquizing, completely oblivious of his surroundings and the other actors.

The general incoherence of the film is worsened by the confusion in the story; we are never quite clear as to the point of it all.

Erwin Hillier deserves high praise for the direction of photography and there are some high spots of local fun in the village of Tre-quanda, in Tuscany. B.N.

OLD MOTHER HUBBUB or CURSORY RHYMES

For The Young Film-Goer

LITTLE boy Rank,
Come blow your horn;
Garbo is resting,
M.G.M.'s in the corn.

* * *

Jack and Jill went up the hill,
To see the latest "creepie."
It made them frown, to pay a
crown;
It sent them home so sleepy.

* * *

Mary had a lambswool coat,
Its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
That coat was sure to go.
One day she met a producer chap,
Who really was a killer;
Now little Mary's lambswool coat
Has turned into chinchilla.

* * *

Hi diddle diddle, promotion's a
fiddle,
In films you jump over the moon.
The little wolves laugh to see such
sport,
The public is fed with a spoon.

* * *

What are little stars made of?
What are little stars made of?
Box-office sales
And blurb writers' tales,
That's what little stars are made
of!

* * *

Sing a song of millions, a pocket
full of gold;
Four and twenty treatments
becoming very cold;
When the film was finished
There wasn't left a bean;
Wasn't that a super film to flash
upon a screen!

* * *

Humpty Hollywood sits on a wall,
Humpty Hollywood will have a
great fall;

And all Goldwyn's forces
And publicity men
Will never put Humpty together
again.

* * *

Little Miss Muffet, received such
a buffet
On viewing herself on the screen.
Tho' trying so madly, and giving
all gladly,
They'd cut out her one only
scene!

DONALD N. COOK.

FILM-SOCIETY NEWS

This year the North London
Co-operative Film Society has
already shown the following films:
Leni Riefenstahl's "Berlin
Olympic Festival of the
Nation"; "King of Kings,"
silent film dealing with the life
of Christ; Dreyer's "La Passion
de Jeanne d'Arc"; Carne's "Le
Quai des Brumes"; and "A Day
at the Races" (Marx Brothers).

**The new season, 1949-50, begins
September 8th.** Main films will be:
"The Last Chance" (Switzer-
land, 1944); "Film and
Reality" (British composite
film, edited by Cavalcanti);
"The Ghost That Never
Returns" (Russia, 1929); "The
Crazy Ray" (Clair, France,
1923); "The Grapes of Wrath"
(Ford, U.S.A., 1940); "M"
(Fritz Lang, Germany, 1932);
"Thunder Rock" (Boulting
Brothers, Britain, 1943);
"Warning Shadows" (Ger-
many, 1923); "Frenzy"
(Sweden, 1944); and "Strange
Incident" (U.S.A., 1943).

The shows take place monthly
at the Co-operative Hall, Seven
Sisters Road, London, N.7.

All communications to:

RONALD TAYLOR, Hon. Sec.,
40, Ecclesbourne Gardens,
Palmers Green, London, N.13.

LET'S FACE IT

THE MOVIES ARE ON TRIAL

BY PAUL NUGAT

THE creative climate of Hollywood appears to be gravely disturbed. There are more pictures in production than in the corresponding period twelve months ago, but there is nothing in the titles or subject matter to suggest they will result in a higher percentage of "winners." The present box-office slump in American cinemas is not stimulating the studios to greater enterprise and originality of thought because they ascribe the doldrums to various influences outside their control rather than face the causes within their own orbit.

Taking Precautions

Certainly trade recession, growing unemployment, the seasonal and annual arrival of hot weather, are all contributory reasons and so is that latest and most blameworthy child — Television. The latest statistics at the end of March showed that 1,200,000 people owned television sets; 3,000,000 people, it is anticipated, will be owners by the end of the year; 18,000,000 people will be owners by January, 1954. From these figures, it would seem that the Americans are hungry for a new popular art. Some Holly-

wood producers think the hunger will pass away with the novelty of television. Others are less sure and are taking the financial precaution of setting up subsidiary film companies to cash in on this new market.

Why the Enthusiasm?

Allowing for the high-pressure system of American salesmanship and the popular appeal of any new invention, why should a very raw kind of entertainment be galvanising so much enthusiasm? For it is freely admitted in all responsible quarters that television programmes in America are far inferior to anything emanating from Alexandra Palace.

Facts About Small Towns

Yet there is this ever-growing demand . . . the reason supplied, I think, by an American relative from a typical small town in North Carolina . . . a town found anywhere and everywhere in the States. It is a town with a population of 25,000; there are no "live" theatres, commercial, repertory, or amateur. The inhabitants are wholly dependent on the movies. They have never seen a British film; some of the best American pictures by-pass

them, and they get what's left. "What's left" is all too often a sorry tale — an allurements with star appeal that sends the faithful audience away empty and discontented. This particular relative justly complains that all the intelligence of America is not located in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Her viewpoint is not shared by the entertainment monopolists in her town.

Hollywood's Stranglehold.

Television, therefore, represents a possible means of escape from the mediocre and the bad in films to her way of thinking. But, her chances of escape are zero. Hollywood has already formed its Television Film Producers' Association. They have calculated that half of any television programme will have to be devoted to films. You can well imagine what kind of films these are going to be from one fact alone. A film story, running for 30 minutes, is taking no more than two or three days to produce. A good feature film of that length, produced for your cinema, would require from three to four weeks. Time is no guarantee of quality, it is true. But entertainment of any merit exacts certain minimums below which lies a shoddy spectacle. **One reputable American magazine has summed up television films as being on a par with the cinema of 1910.**

Probably Americans are prepared to endure them "for the sake of progress" . . . whatever that much-used phrase may mean. But will the public mind differentiate in the long run between the film on the television screen and

the film in the cinema? From all accounts, the difference in that small North Carolina town will be the difference in purely technical standards, and nothing more.

Obsessed With Technique

If there is heard the note of alarm on the impending competition from television, recent articles, in American journals, from film makers and theatre owners, show that they are still thinking along the lines of mechanical improvements in technique and audience-comfort to stave off the threat. They write about the need to increase the size of the screen in cinemas (presumably to impress the audience with the paltry dimensions of the television screen of to-day). They are prepared to scrap the use of 35mm. film in favour of bigger film stock, and as a last resort they will give away their pop-corn free, if it will seduce patrons from their homes.

Facing Public Jury

I gave this article the title, "The Movies Are on Trial," not because trials are all the vogue in America just now, nor because I think that we are witnessing the twilight of the cinema era. The increasing popularity of opera, ballet, and theatre, shows that one art medium can never destroy another. And so, if films in America find themselves in the witness-box, they have been put there to face the judgment of the public they have created, and not because of the fickleness of that public.

Henceforth, they must produce better results, if only in order to survive.

WHAT OF THE CARTOON?

by R. E. WHITEHALL

It is said that Disney has already brought the cartoon to its zenith - it is swiftly becoming stereotyped. But in Britain, Czechoslovakia and Russia, there is a different story to tell

Has the cartoon a future? Or will its universal appeal become dissipated by the general moulding of excellent American cartoons to the same inevitable pattern that is beginning to break the American cartoon down into a depressing sameness? Disney is a good example; he still shows flashes of his old genius, but situations and tricks are now constantly repeated, particularly noticeable when programmes of six or more of his films are screened in the news-reel cinemas. For pure comic invention he has now been surpassed by the makers of the "Tom and Jerry" series; whose **Cat Concerto**, the Academy Award-winning cartoon based on the eccentricities of the Polish pianist, Vladimar de Pachmann, is a gem of its kind.

And Disney's work has frequently been equalled by the producers of such wild burlesques as **Who Killed Doc Robin?**, which guys all the conventions of the screen detective yarn; while for experimentation the Morey-Sutherland **Daffy Ditties** seemed to be working towards something new until their creators began to concentrate on live-action feature-films. **Daffy Ditties** attempted a mixture of the drawn film and the puppet film, with the narration consisting of straightforward commentary with highly effective

choral links.

Halas and Batchelor

This humour is young and clear, but strangely enough, although the screens are crowded with humanized animals, the Americans have never succeeded in producing an acceptable human being, a hurdle our own Halas-Batchelor unit seem to have cleared successfully with Charley, an individual figure (perfectly fitted to Harold Berens' Yorkshire twang) which does not aim at an authentic reproduction of the human form, yet manages a life-like creation. This is probably where John Halas and Joy Batchelor have scored over Disney and Max Fleisher, who tried to draw the outward form of the human figure in all its detail (although Disney later experimented with a mixture of live action and animation, a method that has marred most of his later works since **Bambi**).

For a true copy of a human being in an animated cartoon seems to be as unconvincing as a real horse in the ballet, the touch of realism is an intrusion on the fantasy.

Didactic AND Humorous

Attempts to establish a British school of cartoon film has always failed; animators had failed to

achieve a tradition as rich and British as the cartoons of Hogarth, Rowlandson, or Gillray, until "Charley" came upon the scene. Produced at a cost of £6,000 each, some half-dozen "Charley" cartoons have been shown since March, 1948, designed to help the ordinary citizen with some of his problems, using laughter to enforce their serious instructional content, yet in seeking for comedy never degenerating into farce.

New Town, the first, explained the need for satellite towns;

Your Very Good Health described the health services and how to use them; **Charley's March of Time** stressed the need for increased production; **Robinson Charley** explained the reasons for the economic state of the country, and did this far more lucidly and wittily than a handful of pamphlets; and **Charley's Black Magic** dealt with that controversial subject, coal.

More Graphic than Documentary

Halas-Batchelor have won a place for the cartoon in the instructional and informative field that was only adequately filled by the documentary film with its somewhat plodding expository technique. And in the elimination of unessential details and drawing upon the best in modern art—at times their films are almost abstract in the forms of their colours and compositions, particularly in **Charley's Black Magic**—they have created life and a to go wandering down to Somerset, British cartoon that does not have where some animators have been busy with the English scene—God preserve it from them!

Czech Standard High

In their aims and technique the British unit are way ahead of Karl

Leman, the Czech, whose black-and-white films attempt to fill the same need. "Mr. Prokoup" is the central character in a series designed to recruit labour from one industry into another, or to persuade workers not to take a white-collar job; and despite the shortcomings of the technical realisations, they do manage to perform the task assigned to them with a signal good humour that is both contemporary and unmannered.

Mr. Prokoup Makes a Film is probably the best of these, managing to cram a large amount of satire into its running time, particularly its observation on the furious activity of most people when a movie camera is in the immediate vicinity.

Derivative and Symbolic

Fortunately the Czechs had the good sense to appoint a well-known painter, Jiri Trnka, as head of the cartoon section of their industry (the aptly and delightfully named "Brothers in Tricks"), and his graphic designs, particularly in some of his abstract films, reach a high level of pictorial composition.

The Czechs, too, have produced work that is rich and haunting by borrowing the forms and the colouring of Eastern art; thus Jiri Trnka's **The Animals and the Brigands** was a perfect recreation from a series of Chinese colour prints, with considerable symbolic undertones.

Charm of Russian Cartoon

In this borrowing from ancient arts the Czechs have a certain affinity with the Russians; thus some productions from the cartoon studios in Moscow contain indelible traces of a study of Moghul art and of the Asiatic arts which are, presumably, represented

(Continued on page 42)



... AND
WHITHER
WALT ?

by
PAUL NUGAT

another "live" film, R.K.O.'s *SO DEAR TO MY HEART*.

Is Disney now seeking a compromise? Will he be successful in his attempts to merge flesh and fantasy?

THE last time Walt Disney visited us, he came on a leprechaun hunt, putting several noses out of joint by believing in their Irish habitat.

Now, at the time of writing, he is with us again to indulge in one further excursion along a path that has produced several unexpected by-roads. Apart from his family he has brought over the worry of Jim Hawkins and Long John Silver. For Walt Disney is a worrying man, and *Treasure Island* is rather a new enterprise for his studio.

Undoubtedly he has sound financial reasons for making an all "live" picture. Cartoon films have never made money for him or anybody else. They never will. His full-length films like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Bambi*, *Song of the South*, are half-a-million-pound ventures, which gamble on the child in all of us. And the facts about how tenderly we surrendered in the past, belong to history—and the

bank balance.

Gamble is the only correct word to be used when thinking of the adult audience in strict economic terms. In bestowing character and personality on his animal creations, there has been an authenticity that betokens a deep consciousness of our collective dream world, in which we refresh ourselves with power and talent that we ourselves do not possess. It captured our concealed wish to be as successful as Lindbergh, on his transatlantic flight, when we saw a small mouse like Mickey triumphantly *Plane Crazy*, *Gallop in'*, *Gauche* caricatured our longing to be as acrobatically gallant as Douglas Fairbanks, senr. And Mickey's *Gala Premiere* must have been the envy of every youthful and aged film fan.

Good caricature is the most disarming of arts; bad caricature arouses the most critical spirit. And it must be said that Walt Disney has been markedly unsuccessful with his drawing of human

beings. His Snow White and Prince Charming were moulds of marzipan. Disney has said, "While we have improved greatly in our handling of human figures, it will be many years before we can draw them as convincingly as we can animals." Since he wrote that, Popeye has stolen the human thunder. He provides the audience with the perennial theme—the little under-dog who emerges on top, unscathed.

Seeking Compromise?

I may be wrong, but I feel that Popeye has made Walt Disney give up the ghost over humans. He seems to be seeking for a compromise between flesh and fantasy. He tried it in *The Three Caballeros*, and again in *Song of the South*, and the result was that the feet of this Californian Colossus did not comfortably stride the two worlds.

It is somewhat surprising that this shrewd man intends to persist in the experiment. A long time ago, before the birth of Mickey Mouse, Alice was ill at ease in Cartoonland; Oswald the Rabbit took her place on the drawing-board.

In turn, Oswald made way for Mickey Mouse and the voice of the master himself. For, the streak of sentimentality, which runs so strongly through Disney's work, is illuminated by his insistence on providing Mickey with his own vocal chords, despite the ever-increasing burden of executive work.

Musical Appreciation

The career of Mickey Mouse had no serious competition until the Silly Symphonies made their appearance with *Skeleton Dance*, *Winter, Busy Beavers*, *Egyptian Melodies*.

These films showed that Disney was a long way ahead of other cartoon companies in his appreciation of the future of sound and music. (1) to stress the caricature of character action, (2) to stir our imagination in the world of fan-

tasy and nature by the laws of music and rhythm.

No less **avant-garde** was Disney's early embrace of Technicolor. As that outstanding scholar, R. F. Feild, has said in his critical evaluation of Disney's work, the *Flowers and Trees* (1931) was to herald *Fantasia*, ten years later.

Better in the Abstract?

The essential difference between animal creations and the Silly Symphonies seems to be that in the first instance the story has been evolved around the very definite personalities of the animals, so that they never appear in incongruous situations; and in the second instance, the fantasy emerges out of a musical pattern, and, on the whole, out of popular music.

For me, at least, he has been most successful, when he has confined the fantasy to the sphere of the abstract.

Return of Big Bad Wolf?

I have said nothing about Donald Duck. I ought to, because Donald Duck is the one animal creation to have shown some character change. Frankly, I find Donald a pain in the neck. He has become loud-mouthed and aggressive. On the odd occasions on which I run into him, I scent the heyday of Al Capone and John Dillinger.

There are two possible solutions to his psychology. Either the American people are being accurately reflected in his machine-gun mentality (since Donald is there to please); or Disney has lost the pulse-beat of his own people. I am going to have the temerity to advise Walt Disney to send his Duck on a long vacation.

And in his place? Well, that big bad depression seems to be stealing up on us. So, why not bring back the three little pigs? Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf? He did a big job in the last depression, didn't he?

SILVANA MANGANO

BY CECILIA FRANCIS

In response to the numerous inquiries from readers throughout the world, here are the details

MANY a tale of sudden success is recorded in the annals of the cinema, but none equals the dazzling rise of Silvana Mangano—the phenomenon of the Italian screen. Her name is known in most countries of the world; her piles of fan-mail swamp Rome studio staffs; she is deluged with offers of marriage; crowds mob whenever she appears in public; and journalists queue to interview her. And is she such a great star that she merits all this fuss? No one knows the answer to this as none of her pictures has yet been seen.

Fame Thrust upon Her

Then who is this Silvana Mangano? ask British audiences. She is just nineteen years of age, an Italian girl, still unspoilt, who, the public has decided, is just the sort of star they want. By a stroke of fortune, Silvana seems to be endowed with every gift necessary to a screen glamour girl, 1949 version.

From the moment Giuseppe de Santis chose her, from amongst a hundred contestants, for the leading role in his *Bitter Rice*, fame has been thrust upon her. Not only because she is unusually beautiful in a luxuriant sort of way, with her brown hair and her velvet black eyes, nor because of her

generous 5 ft. 9 in. physique, radiating splendid vigour; nor for her vital quality and passionate acting, as yet only seen by few.

She was chosen because, added to all this, she has a strange undefinable charm. As the emotional quality of Anna Magnani is specially suited to the medium of the screen so, too, the looks and personality of Silvana Mangano appear ideally right.

Hayworth, plus Bergman

Although a strange contrast, Silvana is said to have something of the physical appeal of Rita Hayworth and the spiritual charm of Ingrid Bergman. A good deal of what is reported about Silvana Mangano can only be pure conjecture; so little is yet known about her. But it does seem that she must have a powerful attraction and far more than mere glamour.

So far the story of her life is quite simple. She was born in Rome, on April 21st, 1930, of an English mother and a Spanish father, both of mixed ancestry ranging from Indian to French. Silvana's education was a normal secondary one and, perhaps due to Anglo-Saxon influence, she was encouraged, along with her sister Patrizia, to take an interest in sport, especially horse-riding.

Leaving school at an early age,

her physical energy directed her towards a dancing career.

Long Training

For seven years she studied with Ja Ruskaya at one of Rome's famous academies—this training is now apparent in her lithe and controlled movements. In 1946 came a big event in her life—she was elected "Miss Rome" at the age of 16. With this first limelight turned upon her, she was signed up to make a film, *Love's Elixir*.

The uncertainties of life in Italy at this time were reflected in the film industry, and producers had little money to sponsor new talent; so apart from several small roles Silvana made little headway.

Times being hard she took a job modelling hats in a Rome store, until she was discovered by de Santis. It was then that Lux films, Italy's leading production company, signed her up on a three-year contract, although long-term tying up of players is unusual on the Continent; the star system is little favoured—players have to rely solely on their merits, rather than on publicity build-up, in order to reach the top. But Silvana, with no aid from high-pressure Hollywood-type publicity, appeared to attract so much attention, that Lux wisely decided to foster her talents.

In *Bitter Rice*, Silvana plays the role of a waitress, a simple girl, who lives in a world of adolescent dreams and impossible hopes fomented by cheap novels and film melodrama. Thrilling to adventure, she becomes involved with a jewel thief, when working in the rice-fields earning extra pay in the summer vacation.

This leads to her murdering the thief, after a passionate love affair; her mind becomes unbalanced by this drama and, unable

to find stability, she kills herself in despair. Silvana's role shows her as sultry and sensuous.

Retiring from Screen

In June she suddenly announced her retirement from the screen. This coincided with her engagement to a producer and, like Rita Hayworth, she promptly disappeared on an international flit. She turned up in Paris where she had driven with her fiance and was then reported to be in London where she, too, stayed in close retirement.

Her decision to leave the screen is regretted, but perhaps she will be persuaded to make a come-back after a few years of matrimony.

WHAT OF THE CARTOON?

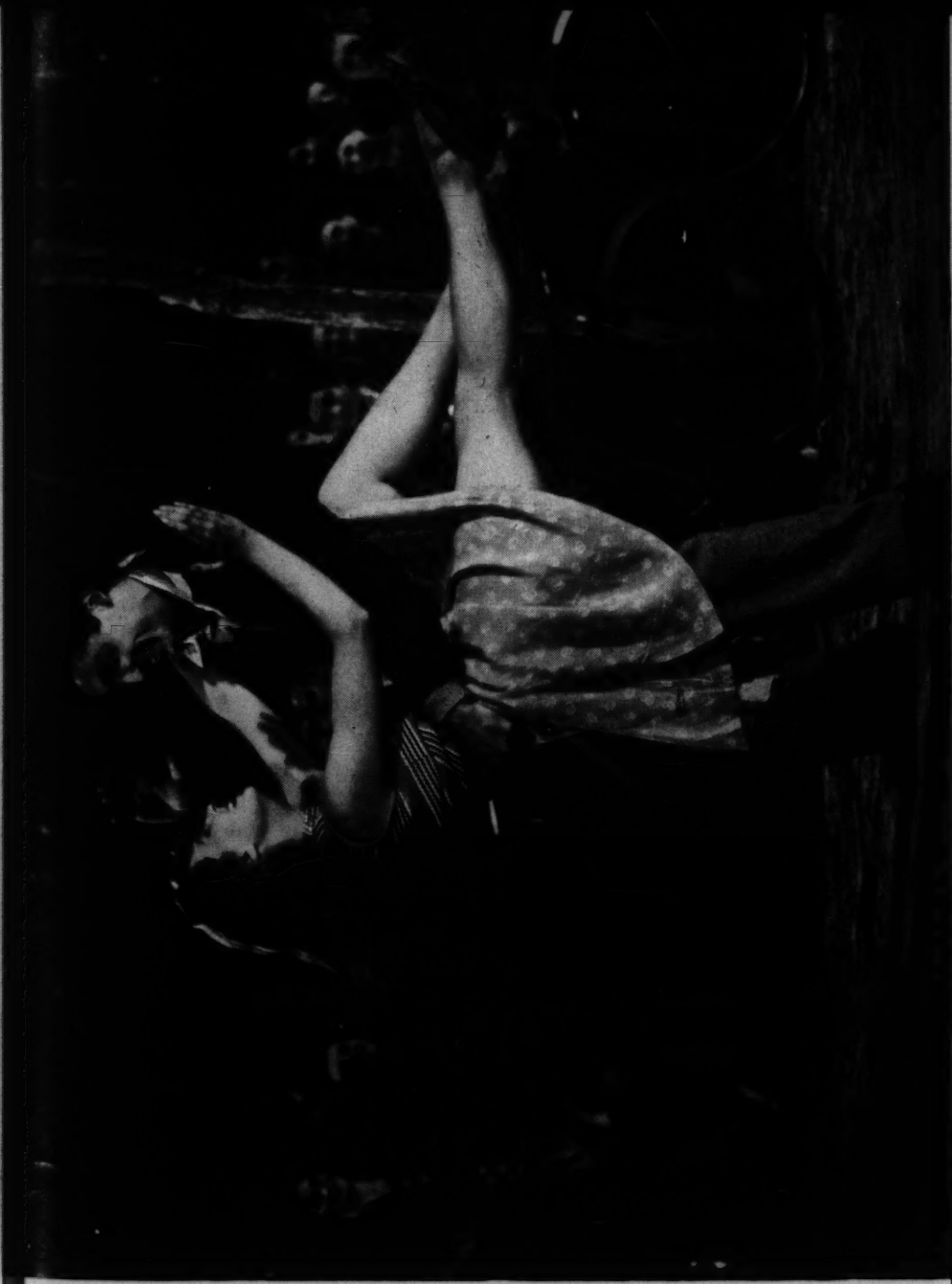
(Continued from page 38)

in the regional cultures of Russia.

The Russians, too, appear to be at the beginning of an exploration into new animation techniques based on the stylized movements of the dance, and having its roots deep in the national love of the ballet, achieving a decorative charm mixed with delightfully humorous fantasy that is completely different from the animated cartoon of the West.

There are critics who said Disney had taken the animated cartoon to its highest peak of expressiveness, leaving no room for further development; but the international flow of cartoons since the end of the war has given us an opportunity of seeing what can be accomplished by our own and by Eastern European artists.

During a break in the filming of BITTER RICE, Silvana Mangano and Vittorio Gassman dance a "boogie woogie" for the benefit of their colleagues and some of the local peasants.



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